

plans to cover free preventative health services, and it lowers prescription drug costs for seniors by closing the Medicare part D doughnut hole.

So, America, my community's seniors have a lot at stake. The California State marketplace, Covered California, has already received 1 million unique site visits, more than 16,000 applications have been completed, and another 27,000 are partially completed. That is more than 43,000 Californians who have taken the step to get covered in just 10 days.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is all very simple. Congress has a handful of basic functions. Two of them are to keep the government open and to pay our bills on time. These things Congress should be doing already.

The situation we are in reminds me of when my brothers and I thought our parents should pay us an allowance for making our beds. My parents argued that making our beds was something that my brothers and I should be doing anyway, that an everyday responsibility like making our beds wasn't something that was done for a payoff.

What should I get for brushing my teeth? That is obviously a personal responsibility that I shouldn't get anything for. Refusing to fulfill a responsibility should not be leverage for getting something that you want.

The House Republicans are expecting to get something out of this. They are expecting to get something out of refusing to fulfill their basic responsibilities. They are expecting to get something out of refusing to fund the government and refusing to be faithful stewards of the full faith and credit of the United States. They are willing to threaten the American dollar and its status as the world's reserve currency.

There are several Members of this body who do not believe the chaos that would be created by not paying our bills on time. One Member said he believed it would "bring stability to the markets." Others have said that it is a "scare tactic" being used by the administration and Democrats. They say this despite every credible economist stating that America defaulting on its debts would be catastrophic.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, imagine if Democrats were this cavalier about an issue as serious as the debt ceiling. We would be run out of town, and for good reason.

I thank my colleagues for joining me today. Let's end this shutdown. Let's end this shutdown, Mr. Speaker. Let's make sure we pay our bills and pay them on time. And let's give the American people the certainty that they need and that they deserve.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I have spent my career in San Diego, Sacramento, and DC working with all of my colleagues—no matter the party—to get things done for my constituents in San Diego.

But now sadly, I stand on this floor and watch what I consider to be the greatest show of political dysfunction I have seen during my time in public service.

I hear my colleagues on the other side of the aisle speak of winning, of putting points on the board. Winning? Mr. Speaker, there is no winning to be had here.

But, I can tell you who is losing—hard working American families, my constituents in San Diego, and the great state of California.

Every day that this shutdown continues more of my friends and neighbors are harmed.

My city of San Diego loses \$7 million a week every week that this continues. \$7 million. Imagine the investments in our schools, roads, and small businesses that we could be making with that money.

Jobless claims are surging as the many San Diegoan contracting businesses are forced to lay off their workers.

Small businesses in San Diego are finding it difficult to sustain their operations, as they lose thousands in stalled federal small business loans and grants.

The many veterans who live in San Diego are finding their hard-earned and well-deserved benefits delayed.

And now, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle talk of negotiating?

The Senate passed a budget in March—in March. For months and months, I have joined with my Democratic colleagues requesting that the House appoint conferees to negotiate a compromise. Nothing. No willingness to open up a dialogue, to negotiate. Nothing.

Now, the government is shut down, and my friends and neighbors in San Diego are suffering. We can fix that right now. We can take a vote to reopen the government right now.

Then we can get together and talk like adults about our differences on the budget—and not use my friends and neighbors as leverage to score points in a game that no one will win. This isn't a game, this is lunacy.

FARM BILL OF 2013

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from California (Mr. DENHAM) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today as a Central Valley farmer, a friend of farmers, an agricultural employer and an agricultural worker, and the Representative of a community that is dependent upon agriculture for its livelihood.

As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I understand the specialized needs of various sectors of our ag economy across the country. My priorities for this farm bill are:

First and foremost, providing a 5-year certainty for farmers while saving taxpayers dollars by eliminating direct payments and reforming nutrition programs for the first time since 1996.

Second, we need to support innovative research and development on specialty crops, a major export for our region and our country as a whole.

Third, we must support programs and increase exports and take advantage of all of the new trade agreements we have strengthened and established in the past years and prepare for those markets which are beginning to open to our ag products.

Fourth, we must also protect domestic produce and farms from pests and diseases that primarily come from other countries.

And fifth and finally, it is imperative that we uphold a State's right to protect its own agriculture industry by passing laws related to safety and agricultural production.

It is time to conference on the farm bill and work with our Senate counterparts to produce a final product that will maintain a safety net for those most in need and give American growers and producers a competitive and productive global edge while saving taxpayers money.

I now yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT).

Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia. I thank the gentleman from California, my friend and colleague and a strong advocate for agriculture in this country.

Mr. Speaker, Americans do not like being dependent on foreign oil, and Americans sure don't want to become dependent on foreign food. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the importance of passing a farm bill.

In my home State of Georgia, agriculture plays a major role in the overall success of our State. Last year, Georgia agriculture was valued at over \$14 billion, and the total economic contribution to Georgia was \$72 billion. This contribution makes up approximately 10 percent of our gross domestic product and 360,000 jobs. In my district, one of every eight jobs is tied to agriculture.

As a major economic driver of our State, the agricultural industry has suffered without the certainty of a farm bill. Over the past several months, our farmers have had to deal with this uncertainty within the industry because Washington has not been able to agree on a farm bill.

Many of my constituents are left in limbo, trying to decide what to do next year with regard to their crops, wondering if there will be crop insurance or the other things that they depend on for their farm operations and their livelihoods. That is why it is critical to provide the certainty of a farm bill, to boost our economy and help our farmers and our farm families succeed and create jobs.

The farm bill we passed in the House saves taxpayers over \$20 billion. I want to reiterate that, Mr. Speaker—over \$20 billion and it makes real progress in tackling the drivers of our debt. It consolidates more than 100 programs administered by the USDA and improves agricultural programs to be more cost effective and market oriented by repealing outdated and unworkable permanent law.

I ask my colleagues to join me so we can move to conference and sign a new farm bill into law in order to provide certainty for our country and America's farmers.

Mr. DENHAM. I thank the gentleman from Georgia.

I now yield to the gentleman from Montana (Mr. DAINES).

Mr. DAINES. Mr. Speaker, whenever I drive across Montana, I see signs of our State's strong ag heritage in about every turn in the road. From the fields of sugar beets and wheat to grazing cattle and sheep, these are visual reminders of the importance of agriculture to our State and everywhere across this country.

Agriculture is the backbone of Montana's economy. And as a fifth-generation Montanan, I have a deep appreciation for the value of this industry to our State. Agriculture injects several billion dollars into Montana's economy every year, and one in five Montana jobs rely on agriculture.

But agriculture is more than the economic driver of our State. It is a way of life for thousands of Montana families who have lived off the land for generations. My own great, great grandmother came to Montana as a homesteader. In fact, she homesteaded up in the Golden Triangle of Montana, north of Great Falls, in the heart of Montana's wheat country.

I know how important it is to ensure that young Montanans have the opportunity to continue working on family farms and family ranches. And that is why Montanans are so frustrated and I am so frustrated by Washington's persistent failure to pass a long-term farm bill that provides Montana's producers with the certainty they need and deserve.

Montanans are sick and tired of the political games that have long delayed the passage of a 5-year farm bill. This critical legislation is long overdue, and it is unacceptable that Congress continues to stand in the way of providing our ag producers and rural communities with a long-term solution.

Agriculture is not only an important part of Montana's economy, but it is a critical industry that impacts each and every American. And as Montana's sole voice in the U.S. House of Representatives, I am committed to being an advocate for Montana's farmers and ranchers. We can't wait any longer. We need a farm bill now.

Mr. DENHAM. I thank the gentleman from Montana.

I now recognize the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO).

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1947, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013.

Over the last 4 years and after more than 40 hearings, the House of Representatives has produced a bill that implements needed commonsense reforms for America's farmers.

The FARRM Act is like any other farm bill previously passed. It has strong bipartisan support and makes substantial reforms, repealing outdated policies while streamlining and consolidating over 100 programs.

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Advancing a new farm bill into law this year is crucial to the entire coun-

try, especially to those in California's Central Valley.

The legislation makes critical reforms to traditional farm programs. The Market Access Program, MAP, will improve export market development and assistance to programs that promote U.S. agricultural products overseas, allowing our specialty crop farmers here in the Valley to expand their businesses.

We eliminate direct payments. We move to a more market-oriented approach where we provide more risk management tools, instead of making payments regardless of market conditions. Many farmers in my district have questioned these economically unfeasible \$5 billion payments that go out every year, regardless of market conditions.

The bill makes improvements to the crop insurance program through successful public-private partnerships that ensure farmers have skin in the game. This will eliminate some of the unrealistic requirements that crop insurance agents face every day, such as asking an agent to verify his or her customers' income.

The legislation relieves farmers of unnecessary burdens by including multiple regulator relief provisions. FARRM eliminates the duplicative permitting requirements for pesticides that are already federally regulated. Failure to remove the additional permit requirement will result in an administrative and financial nightmare for agriculture producers, public health agencies, and Federal Government and State agencies.

The FARRM bill makes even more important changes that substantially affect California's 21st Congressional District:

Reauthorizes, strengthens, and fully pays for livestock disaster assistance;

Continues to support specialty crops, just as the 2008 farm bill did, by fully funding core specialty crop industry priorities such as Specialty Crop Block Grants. These grants will fund innovative research for my district's fruit, vegetable, and nut farmers to combat disease and promote consumption across the U.S., and that is important for food security. A nation has to be secure in its food.

The FARRM Act of 2013 will implement the most significant reforms to traditional farm policy in history, while maintaining commonsense, fiscally responsible policies. Passage of this legislation will provide America's farmers and ranchers, especially those in the Central Valley, the certainty and resources they need to produce an adequate and affordable food supply for our country and the entire world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting this much-needed legislation.

Mr. DENHAM. I thank the gentleman from California.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

PASS THE FARM BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, thank you, and thank you to my colleagues who have joined me here today to talk about an important piece of legislation that seemingly has gone by the wayside, like many, many other important issues, because of the dysfunction of Washington right now: a farm bill.

Many here in America don't realize that our current farm bill has expired. But we have an opportunity to pass a food, nutrition, and jobs bill that Congress is supposed to authorize every 5 years. But since it expired on September 30, the good news, though, is that there is still an opportunity to get this 5-year farm bill passed; and when we do, we are going to be able to give our farmers and producers the tools they need to do what they do best. We can do this before next planting season.

Why do we need a farm bill? To promote and grow our economy, to provide certainty to our farmers and producers, and to give them the tools they need to succeed.

For example, crop insurance. Mr. Speaker, crop insurance is working. I even had the opportunity to talk to Secretary Vilsack in one of the hearings on our Ag Committee, and he agreed with me that crop insurance is working. This farm bill strengthens crop insurance, which strengthens our economy, because it strengthens agriculture.

Ag is one of the bright spots in our Nation's economy right now, Mr. Speaker. That should not be forgotten, which is why it is crucial that we pass this farm bill.

We have other policies within that bill that are very crucial to my district and many districts throughout this Nation: conservation, ag research, and trade.

As we stand on the floor today, many of the farmers I represent are out in the field. Mr. Speaker, it is harvest time. That is why we are down here today: to let our producers know we have not forgotten and that we are still fighting for that 5-year farm bill.

Farmers used to just have to worry about the uncertainty of the weather. Now, Mr. Speaker, they have to worry about the uncertainty of Washington. That is unfortunate, but it is something that we can correct when we work together.

Mr. Speaker, I came here to govern. I sought a seat on the Ag Committee because I knew we would have an opportunity to leave our mark on this jobs legislation. We want to get this job done so that our farmers can continue to get their job done.

I appreciate the many colleagues who have already spoken before me and the rest who are down here today for this